NUMB. XXIV.

The GRUMBLER.

By *Squire* GIZZARD.

Advenit qui veſtra dies muliebribus armis
Verba redargueret.---------- Virg.

From *Tueſday* June 7. to *Friday* June 10. 1715.

MY Readers may remember, that in a former Paper I hinted at great Feuds in *Paris* amongſt the Men of Wit and polite Letters. Mrs. *Dacier* was the General under whom one Party liſted themſelves; and Mr. *de la Motte* is the Commander in Chief of the other. The following Piece (which is a Tranſlation from the *French*) is worth the Peruſal of thoſe Gentlemen, who are curious to enter into the Merits of the Controverſy, that now engages the Academy and the more refined Aſſemblies in *France*.

A Compariſon between the two Diſcourſes written by Mr. de la Motte *and Mrs.* Dacier *upon the Works of* HOMER.

Mrs. *Dacier* has the Advantage in Point of Erudition; ſhe quotes a great Number of Authors, who in different Ages have admired *Homer*: Mr. *de la Motte* pretends to have the Advantage in Point of Reaſon; allowing no Appeal from that in Matters of Wit and Genius. Mrs. *D.* is not for criticiſing upon an Author, in whoſe Favour ſo many great Men have declared themſelves; and if Religion were the Queſtion in Debate, ſhe would have the ſame Advantage over Mr. *de la M.* that the Catholiques have over the Proteſtants: Mr. *de la M.* thinks it injurious to ſound Senſe to admire any Thing upon the Authority of another, which does not in it's ſelf appear worthy of Admiration.

Mrs. *D.* by writing with a great deal of Warmth againſt Mr. *de la M.* has let ſlip ſome of thoſe Advantages, which from her Knowledge in the *Greek* Language ſhe might have taken over her Adverſary: Mr. *de la M.* has by his Moderation, made Repriſals upon Mrs. *D.* for the Advantages he loſt by his Ignorance in *Greek*.

The Diſcourſe of Mrs. *D.* is more ſimple and more natural: that of Mr. *de la M.* is more artful and more laboured. The one is crouded with Quotations; and the other is filled with Reflections. Mrs. *D.* ſeems to have undertaken the Defence of *Homer*, for no other Reaſon, but becauſe ſhe underſtood *Greek*: Mr. *de la M.* ſeems to have attacked *Homer*, only becauſe he does not underſtand the Language, in which that Poet writ. The Majority even of thoſe, who know nothing of *Greek*, have declared for Mrs. *D.* There is but a ſmall Number of Perſons, ſeveral of which do not underſtand *Greek*, who ſide with Mr. *de la M.* It is equally ſurprizing, to ſee a Lady take the Part of *Homer*, and a Member of the Academy attempt to bear him down.

(Price Two-Pence.)

Mrs.

Mrs. *Dacier* does not gain ſo much Reputation by defending *Homer*, as Mr. *de la Motte* looſes by attacking him. The Severity, which appears in the Diſcourſe of Mrs. *D.* makes one apt to ſuſpect, that ſhe has not ſo well ſupported a good Cauſe: the Politeneſs, which is viſible in the Diſcourſe of Mr. *de la M.* makes one inclinable to wiſh, that he had undertaken a better Cauſe.

Mrs. *D.* has raiſed her ſelf above her Sex; and by defending *Homer*, ſhe has performed more than is expected from a Woman, who is not obliged to enter into the Depths of Learning, nor to poſſeſs the *Greek* Language: Mr. *de la M.* by falling upon *Homer*, has done an Injury to that Reputation, which he had, of being one of the moſt learned Men in the Kingdom.

Homer is not to be admired in every Thing; and it had been more adviſeable in Mrs. *D.* to give him up in ſome Points, which ſhe endeavours to juſtify. *Homer* is far from being ſo inconſiderable, as Mr. *de la M.* ſeems to inſinuate; and he might have attacked him with greater Succeſs, if he had known how to value him more.

The Criticiſm, which Mr. *de la M.* has writ upon *Homer*'s Poem, will neither hinder it from being read, nor take from its true Value: The Reply of Mrs. *D.* to the Diſcourſe of Mr. *de la M.* gives but a diſadvantageous Notion of it; but, upon the Peruſal of it, though you approve it not throughout, you will find in it very excellent Things. Therefore you are neither to Judge of *Homer* by what Mr. *de la M.* ſays of him; nor of the Diſcourſe of Mr. *de la M.* by what Mrs. *D.* ſays of it.

Mrs. *D.* is as extravagantly pleaſed with the *Iliad* of *Homer*, as ſhe is diſpleaſed with the Diſcourſe of Mr. *de la M.* He is neither ſatisfied with the *Iliad* of *Homer*, nor with the Diſcourſe of Mrs. *Dacier*. Mr. *de la M.* has given us the Character of *Homer* as juſtly, as if he had read Him in *Greek*: Mrs. *D.* therefore has tranſlated this Poet well, ſince it is from her Verſion that Mr. *de la M.* has been able to form ſo juſt a Character of *Homer*.

Mr. *de la M.* draws in his Readers to condemn *Homer* with a great deal of Art: Mrs. *D.* cannoniſes every Thing that *Homer* ſays, by the Examples, which ſhe cites out of the *Scripture*. Mr. *de la M.* proceeds with more Addreſs; Mrs. *D.* with more Authority. They are both equally prejudiced; the one is blind to the Defects, the other to the Beauties of *Homer*.

Mr. *de la M.* is too ſparing in his Conceſſions in Favour of the *Greek* Language, which he does not underſtand, in order to raiſe the *French*, of which he is ſo great a Maſter: Mrs. *D.* gives the *Greek* Language, which ſhe underſtands, ſomewhat too great a Superiority over the *French*, of which ſhe is a great Miſtreſs.

The *Greek* Tongue is more copious, and has a greater Strength, than the *French*: it is the Language of a polite Nation, which had a Taſte for every Thing; for Arts, for Sciences, and for Pleaſures.

The *Latin* Tongue has ſomething Maſculine and ſinewy; it is the Language of a People deſtined to Rule over Mankind.

The *French* Tongue is as ſoft, as numerous, as muſical, as the *Greek*, and far more natural: it is more regular than the *Latin*, and has neither its Dryneſs, nor Affectation.

The Public looſes nothing by the Quarrel between Mr. *de la M.* and Mrs. *D.* On the one Hand we are taught, to have a Deference for Notions univerſally received through ſeveral Ages by Men of a diſtinguiſhed Merit: on the other Hand we learn, not to receive the moſt ancient and the moſt authorized Opinions, without Examination. This diſpute likewiſe ſhews us, how far unwary Minds may be byaſſed by Prejudices. Mrs. *D.* for Inſtance, excuſes ſome Paſſages in *Homer*, by producing parallel Examples out of the Bible; as if the Scripture propoſed them as proper Embelliſhments in a Poem. Mr. *de la M.* compares the *French* Language with the *Greek*, which he does not underſtand; never conſidering the Abſurdity of drawing a Compariſon between two Things, the one of which he is ignorant of. He is offended with certain Metaphors, and Compariſons proper to the *Greek* Tongue, as if they muſt of Neceſſity have raiſed the ſame Kind of Images in the Minds of the *Grecians* as they raiſe in us.

To conclude: Mr. *de la M.* has, through his Temper, deſerved from Mrs. *D.* a more gentle Treatment: Mrs. *D.* by her too harſh Expreſſions, ſeems to have given Mr. *de la M.* a Right of ſaying diſobliging Things to her; if any Provocation can juſtify a Man for laying aſide his Reſpect towards a Lady. You ſee by this Parallel, that one may eſteem Mr. *de la Motte*, without being ignorant of *Greek*; and take the Liberty to differ ſometimes from Mrs. *Dacier*, though one be well verſed in *Greek*.

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